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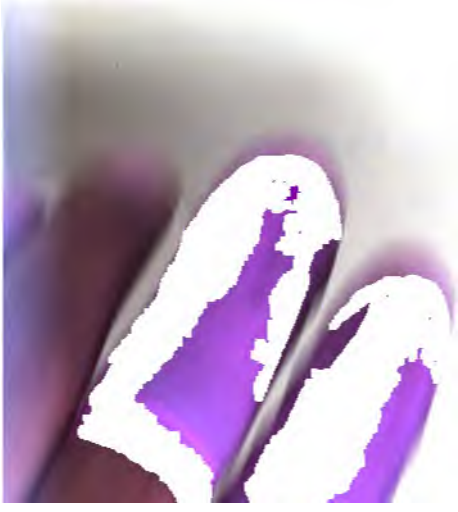

Tale.

THE

CARPENTER'S CHILDREN.

A

NEW ENGLAND STORY.

"God sees me when I am alone, and when no other being sees me."

REPRINTED FROM THE AMERICAN EDITION

BY THE

CHRISTIAN TRACT SOCIETY.

LONDON:

JOHN GREEN, 121, NEWGATE STREET.

1843.

Compton & Ritchie, Printers, Middle Street, Cloth Fair, London.

PREFACE.

THE following story was commenced for a Sunday School class, which was composed of the poorest children.

Its object was to shew them how they could be *religious every day*. There are hundreds of books in our Sunday Schools suited to the wants and capacities of the educated classes, whose path and duties in life are often widely different from their less favored companions in the same school, and we are fully aware how much we owe to very many of the stories written for these classes; yet we think ourselves justified in saying, that there are comparatively few of them calculated for the improvement of the poorer children.

Should this one be thought worthy of a place in our Sunday School libraries, the object of the author will be fully attained.

THE CARPENTER'S CHILDREN.

PART I.

"HERE, Mary," said Mrs. Dutton, "take this bundle of clean clothes to Mrs. May, and ask her, if it is convenient, if she will send me the money for them; they will bring just fifty cents*. I must make up my rent to-day, for it is Saturday, and Mr. Kent will call for it to-night. And won't you come directly home, for I am very busy, and shall want you?"

Mary put on her bonnet and tied on her cloak, and walked as fast as she could to Mrs. May's. She asked in the kitchen if she might see Mrs. May. The girl to whom she spoke went up stairs to her mistress, who sent for Mary to her chamber, for she was not very well.

"Well, Mary," said she, "have you my clothes with you?"

"Yes, ma'am, and mother wishes, if it is convenient, you would have the kindness to send her

* The American dollar contains 100 cents, and is worth 4*s.* 3*d.* English; so that two cents are equal to about a penny, and 50 cents to rather more than 2*s.* of our money.

the money for them, which is fifty cents, for Mr. Kent will call for it to-night."

"And how much does your mother owe for her rent now?"

"She will owe two dollars and fifty cents to-night, ma'am."

"How much has she of it?"

"She has one dollar at home, and this fifty cents will make it all up except one dollar, ma'am."

"How happens it that she is so far behind-hand, Mary?"

"Because, ma'am, Henry, who always helps her, has been at home unwell for nearly two months, and some days he is so ill, that mother cannot leave him to go out to work, and sometimes all that she earns is spent for him."

"And cannot you help your mother? How old are you?"

"I am eleven years old, ma'am, and I should be very glad to help mother, if I only knew how I could."

"What do you think you could do, Mary? Can you sew?"

"Yes, ma'am, pretty well."

"Well, Mary, I have just cut out some coarse caps, and I will let you have one of them to make, and if you do it neatly I will give you ninepence*, with which you may do what you please. Would you like to try?"

"Oh yes, ma'am, and I know very well what I shall do with the money. I shall give it all to

* Ninepence in the money of New England is equal to about 6*d.* of ours, and a shilling to 8*d.*

mother, and then, perhaps, she will not look so serious when Saturday comes."

"Here it is, then, Mary, and here is a needle and some thread, and as soon as you bring it to me, you shall have ninepence; but I depend upon its being done neatly."

"Thank you, ma'am," said Mary, courtesying; "I will try to finish it very soon, and as you will like."

"Here is the fifty cents for your mother, and here are two oranges for Henry: they may refresh him when he is thirsty."

Mary again thanked Mrs. May, and taking the things she had given her, she ran home with them to her mother, and with a light heart, but gentle step, and low voice, she told her how good Mrs. May had been.

"And see, mother, she has given me some work to do, too."

"Given you work, Mary?" said her mother, "and do you think you can sew neatly enough?"

"I can try, and then—but you shall see, mother."

Her mother smiled, and told her that she must be more careful than usual if she expected to have more; and then bade her make haste and put away her things, that she might get tea ready.

Her bonnet and cloak were hung in their proper place, not thrown down upon a table or chair, and her shoes were exchanged for a lighter pair, that she need not disturb Henry, who was asleep; and having arranged the tea-table, and put the teapot by the fire, she prepared one of the oranges, and placed it on the little table that stood by Henry's

bed. "It is but little," thought she, "that I can do for mother and Henry, but that little makes me believe what my catechism tells me, that to be happy we must be good and useful, and it is true, too, that we all have the power of doing good in some way or other." At that moment she heard Henry cough; she was at his side in an instant to offer him something to drink: "Or will you have a piece of orange?"

"Orange, Mary!" said Henry, "how came I by an orange? It is just what I should like."

"Mrs. May sent it to you, for she said she thought you might like it if you were thirsty," said Mary, giving him a piece.

"Yes, it *is* very good, and you must thank Mrs. May for thinking of me. What! you have been out and home again, and got tea ready without disturbing me! How still you have been!"

"Because you seemed to sleep so quietly I could not bear to waken you, so I have been stepping round on tiptoe; but you must not talk any more now, for Dr. A., you know, said that you must be kept very quiet; and by and by, if you would like, I will read you my Sunday lessons, and from a book which my teacher lent to me."

Henry thanked her, and was willing to lie still, for his head ached very much. Mary went to her mother to do any thing she might wish, and to see that her clothes were in neat order for Sunday. She found her mother very busily sewing upon some coarse work which would bring in a little more money towards her rent, and she was therefore trying to finish it, that she might send it home before dark. She looked pale and thin, for she

had worked very hard the last week, and had not slept much, for Henry was very restless at night; but she never complained of being tired, nor spoke impatiently to Mary or Henry, though sometimes Mary gave her a good deal of trouble and care, for she was not always a good girl.

"Can't I help you to hem the end of this sheet, mother?" said Mary. "Henry is going to sleep, and you look so tired, I do want to help you."

"Yes, dear, you may; I shall be glad to have you, for it must be done before seven o'clock, or it will be too late for you to carry it to Miss B.'s," (Mary's Sunday School teacher) "and I must have the money for it to-night; this, with the pillow-cases, will make up the rent, all but fifty cents."

Mary, happy at the thought of helping her mother, went for her work-basket, which was always placed upon the same shelf, when she had done with it, so that her thimble, needle, scissors, pins, and thread, were always to be found when wanted. She had but two needles and a few pins, yet by putting them in their places they lasted a long while.

She seated herself by her mother, and they sewed so steadily, that before seven o'clock the work was finished, and Mary was on her way with it to Miss B.'s.

She received the money for the work, with the offer of more on Monday, or, if her mother preferred it, Miss B. told her that she could procure her a day's washing: upon telling her mother which, she said the washing would be out of the question, for she could not leave Henry.

"But if you will let me stay from school, mother, I am sure I can watch Henry, and sew upon my cap, too."

Mary knew that if she staid away from school on Monday she should lose the prize which was to be given on that day, and she was at the head of her class; but she would rather do this than neglect her mother or brother, being sure that she should in reality be a better girl by losing it, than by gaining it under such circumstances.

Sunday was a bright and beautiful day, and Mary arose earlier than usual, not sleeping longer because it was Sunday; but she did not waken her mother, for she knew that she could do all that was necessary in getting breakfast; and when all was ready, she awoke her mother, who seemed refreshed by the rest which she had taken. Having done so much before breakfast, she had time, before going to the Sunday School, to read over the chapter they were to hear explained.

She passed a pleasant hour there, and returned in time for her mother to go to church, while she remained with Henry. When her mother came home, she looked so quiet and happy, and smiled so kindly on Mary, and seemed so much pleased to find the dinner neatly arranged upon the table, and Henry quietly asleep, and her daughter well employed, that Mary thought she had never felt happier in her life.

The next day was passed with Henry, while her mother went to do the washing; but the day after she went to school, though not until she had done all that could be done for her mother and brother.

As her mother had no work ready for her, with

her permission she took the cap which Mrs. May had given her to make. She asked her schoolmistress to allow her to fit it herself, and received from her the necessary instructions. As she was going home from school with one of the girls who was a year older than herself, talking about the prize, which one of the scholars had gained the day before, her companion, Lydia Neele, said to her,

"Pray, Mary, why did you want to fit your own work this morning? I am sure I would not give myself the trouble, when I could get any one else to do it."

"For two or three reasons, Lydia," said Mary: "one was, I think we ought to learn to fit work as well as to sew it, else we can never complete it by ourselves; and another was, because I engaged to do the work myself, therefore I thought I had no right to ask Miss R.'s assistance."

"Engaged to do it yourself!" said Lydia. "What do you mean? surely you do not pretend to take in work, do you?"

"If I can do a little to help my mother, I do not know that being so young need prevent me," said Mary, mildly, for Lydia had spoken to her as though she meant to laugh at her. "Besides," she added, "mother has let me go to school on purpose that I might help her and myself."

"La, Mary! you are always so proper and precise, and think you always do just right; for my part, I wish in my heart mother would not oblige me to go to school; I am always glad when Sunday comes, for then I neither have to work nor read, and can play as much as I choose. But

what do you mean about the work? are you really doing it for money?"

"I am indeed, Lydia," said Mary.

"Pray, how much are you to have for it, and who is going to give it to you?" said Lydia, in the same ridiculing tone; but Mary answered as before:—

"Mrs. May, a lady for whom my mother works now and then, and she said that, if I did it well, she would give me ninepence for it."

"Only ninepence! what, for all that ruffling, and the cap besides! Why, what a simpleton you are. I wouldn't make it for less than twenty-five cents."

"I shall be contented though, if I can earn ninepence for it," returned Mary, a little roused by Lydia's toss of the head, "for I do not think it is worth more. It is not of the nicest kind, you see, and I am thankful to be able to earn any thing."

"What has made you so very anxious to get money, Mary? I never heard you talk so about it before."

"It never occurred to me that I could earn money, till Mrs. May asked me if I could not help mother by sewing; and when I said I should like to try, she gave me this work to do."

"How much do you think ninepence will help her, pray? Come, I'll make a bargain with you; I will help you to do it, if you will divide the money with me, for I happen to want six cents very much just now, that I may get a little doll which I saw the other day, and which mother won't buy for

me, and then you shall play with it, just as much as if it were your own; and think what a nice time we shall have dressing and undressing it, and making its clothes!"

As Lydia thought of the pleasure they would have, she looked so happy, that Mary, for the moment, felt as if she should enjoy it too, and began to ask herself, "After all, 'tis but ninepence; I wonder if it would help mother much; besides, won't it be my own money, and shan't I have a right to do as I please with it?" Just then they came to her house, and as she stopped at the gate Lydia said,

"Well, Mary, will you?"

"I'll tell you at school, this afternoon," said Mary, and she went into the house. She found her mother very busy at her ironing, so busy that she scarcely looked up when Mary opened the door; but Mary's mind was so filled with what Lydia had said about the doll, that she did not notice her mother's unusual silence, until after having hung up her cloak and bonnet, and putting away her books, she went to the basket of clothes as usual, from which her mother was ironing, to see if there were not some small articles which she could iron, but to her surprise she found it empty.

"Why, mother!" said she, and the suddenness with which she spoke, made Mrs. Dutton start, and the colour come into her pale cheek.

"Why, mother? How happens it that you have so little to iron to-day? There is only one shirt on the horse, and you are ironing the last piece." As she finished speaking, she looked up in her

mother's face, and seeing the unusual colour, and still more unusual tear, she went up to her, and said in a lower gentle tone,

"What has happened, mother? Is brother worse?"

"No, my child, but he is no better; and the doctor says that he must have nice nourishing food, and that he will not get up his strength to be about again until the spring, and winter is not half gone yet, and I know not how I shall obtain him the food. I cannot bear to ask the ladies for it, and I cannot get work enough to pay the rent, and supply him too. These two shirts are all the washing I shall have this week, and though they will bring but one shilling, I am thankful to have the means of earning that little."

Mary's heart beat quickly, and her colour came as she heard her mother say these words, and she said to herself, "how glad I am, I did not say 'yes' to Lydia: for if mother thinks a shilling is worth her earning, surely ninepence is worth mine, and it will help a little, for all Lydia says it is such a mite; and perhaps if I do this well, and get it done before Saturday, I may have another to do besides, and that will bring more, and I will tell Lydia this afternoon, the first thing, that I am sorry I cannot join her about the doll."

Mrs. Dutton was so busy that she did not observe the change in Mary's face, and when she next looked at her, she was sewing very intently upon her cap.

"How busy you are, Mary," said she: "what are you sewing so steadily?"

"The cap, mother, which Mrs. May gave me

to make; I want to carry it home to-morrow night, and then perhaps she will give me more."

"Pray what has made you so anxious to obtain work, Mary?"

"Why, mother, when Mrs. May first asked me about earning something for myself, I thought that I never could; but when she was so kind about it, and gave me the work to do, I began to think that perhaps I might succeed, and I have got on so much faster than I thought I should, that I feel courage to go on, and if I should earn twenty-five cents this week!"—and Mary involuntarily laid down her work, and looked up with delight to her mother.

"Well, my child, and what could you do with twenty-five cents?" said her mother, kindly; but before Mary could answer, a low murmur from Henry had called his mother to his side, and Mary felt glad that she was not obliged to speak, for she wanted the pleasure of surprising her mother at the end of the week.

On her way to the school, in the afternoon, she met Lydia, who, the moment she saw Mary, ran up to her, looking very happy. "Oh, Mary, I have seen the doll," said she; "it is up at the window, and it is just round this corner; if you will come with me, I will shew it to you." And she caught Mary's hand, and began to approach the spot, but Mary drew back a little, and said,

"If it be ever so pretty, Lydia, I can't help you to buy it."

"Why not? Is not Mrs. May going to give you the ninepence?" "Oh yes, if I do the work well; but I cannot join with you in getting the

doll, because I—because I want the money for something else."

Lydia looked at her a moment as if she did not understand her, but when Mary repeated the words, she exclaimed,

"Well, keep your money, you stingy girl! You know that I would not have done so by you; but I don't care, I can get the money some other way; 'tis'nt such a mighty sum, after all." And tossing her head, she was turning away, when Mary stopped her, saying,

"Lydia, if you knew why I wished to keep it, you would not think me so stingy, and you would, I am sure, say that I am right."

"What are you going to do with it, then? Why don't you tell me?"

Mary hesitated a moment before answering, for she remembered all that her Sunday teacher had told her about "not letting the left hand know what the right hand doeth;" and she knew that she should, in this instance, make a little sacrifice. Presently she said,

"I do not want to tell you, Lydia; please not to ask me: I have a good use for it, though."

"La! how mighty mysterious you are, but I don't care; you may have the whole of the ninepence, for any thing that I care about it." And Lydia darted from Mary's side up the schoolhouse steps, which they at that moment reached.

Lydia Neele's father and mother were poor, but instead of trying to procure work, they seldom or never sought for it, unless when they were almost starving; and a part of what they earned was spent in rum. Of course they were not fit to take

care of children, and poor Lydia saw very little at home to make her good. She was not always so bad a girl as she appeared in this little transaction with Mary, and had she had as many opportunities of gaining good habits as Mary, she would in all probability have been as good a girl.

But the neglect of her parents was not the only cause of her faults. Her schoolmistress often corrected her, and tried to make her feel the necessity of getting rid of her bad habits. She told her about her conscience, which would make her know whether she had done right or wrong; and Lydia always found that after she had been idling away her time, or had been unfaithful at school, unkind to her schoolmates, or ill-natured and impertinent, she was not happy, but felt discontented and uncomfortable, and she found also that when she had been industrious, kind, obliging, and good-humoured, she was light-hearted and happy. She had learned too, at school, who it was that had made her, and who it was that made this beautiful world, and how much He was constantly doing for her improvement and happiness, and how much she ought to love and try to please Him.

But though she heard all this, she did not often think of it, nor try to act by it; she was too thoughtless to dwell long upon serious subjects, and if when she had been doing wrong she felt unhappy, she would strive to drive away the feeling by some amusement or play. Her mother and father never took any pains to strengthen the good impressions she received at school; and when they did correct her for doing wrong, they were either under the effects of the liquor they

had drunk, or it was from the habitual irritability which it produces. At one time they would punish her severely for some slight fault, and at another would pass over a great sin; and this irregularity of government taught her to conceal from them her bad conduct, when they suspected or questioned her, and to avoid a blow she would tell them a falsehood.

Mary had often asked her why she would not go to the Sunday School with her, telling her she was sure she would love her teacher; but Lydia always found some excuse, either about her clothes or something else, so that her Sundays were passed in play or idleness. Now this was Lydia's own fault, for neither of her parents would have prevented her going, as they were either in a sound sleep, or under the influence of spirituous liquors, and neither knew nor cared how Lydia passed her time. Besides, Mary's mother had offered any Saturday to wash and iron a frock for Lydia to wear on Sunday. Then she was very irregular at her day school, for if she met with any thing by the way which amused her, she stopped to look at it, or to join in it; of course, she would arrive at school late, and the door would be locked. Her mother often sent her out to beg too, and to get chips; and though she might easily have done these errands, and have gone to school also, she was glad of the excuse for staying away. Thus, although Lydia's parents were much to be blamed for their child's misconduct, there was much of wrong that she might have avoided, if she had availed herself of the means of improvement and knowledge which were offered her, and which her

conscience, the guide which her Heavenly Father had given her, warned her not to neglect.

Lydia had naturally an amiable, affectionate disposition. She was inclined to be generous to her companions, but the indulgence of ill humour and selfishness, and, worse than all, a habit of falsehood, was beginning to render her suspected among those who knew her, and very few of her school-mates were willing to be with her. She had no rule of right in her own heart, to which she might apply when she was in doubt how to act. True, her conscience reminded her that there was a rule, which sooner or later she must regard, if she expected to be happy in this world or the next; but she almost always contrived to forget or to stifle its warnings. Such were Lydia Neele and her home.

Mary Dutton's father had been dead several years. For some time previous to his death, he had been a source of great anxiety and sorrow to his wife. He was a carpenter by trade, and when he was first married he was an honest, industrious man, and was able to support his family comfortably. Mrs. Dutton took in washing and sewing, and with this assistance he was always out of debt.

But when his family became larger, his expenses increased, and one of his children was in bad health, which took off from his earnings, and prevented his wife from doing her usual work. Business became very dull, he got into debt, and knew not how to extricate himself.

Mrs. Dutton became almost exhausted by the constant care which she bestowed upon their sick child, who was a great sufferer.

The man for whom Dutton worked failed, and was unable to pay his workmen's wages. He suffered among others, and came home almost in despair the night he found that to be the case, and for the first time in his life answered his wife's kind inquiries in harsh tones. She was surprised and grieved, though she was careful to speak gently and kindly in reply. She placed his supper before him, which she had kept hot at the fire, and began to talk about other things, which she thought would interest him; but she did not succeed, for, pushing the table from him, he said in a loud and agitated tone, and taking her by the arm,

"Mary! look at your dying boy, and at your other little ones! Could you bear to see them perish with cold and hunger? That," pointing to the untasted food, "is our last meal, and do you think that *I* could eat it?" He continued looking at her in so strange a manner, that she was silent from the fear that his reason had left him. She gently drew away her arm, and silently commending herself to Heaven's guidance, after prevailing upon her husband to sit by her, she said to him, in an affectionate tone,

"Henry, what has happened to you? I can bear to hear the truth; do not fear to tell me?"

Her kind and firm manner seemed to calm his excited spirits, for tears forced themselves through the hands which vainly strove to conceal them. A crowd of terrifying thoughts pressed heavily on Mary's heart, and she dreaded, she scarce knew what. She at length ventured to repeat her inquiries.

"Mary," said her husband, in a collected tone, "I must go to jail, and you and your children must perish with hunger. Mr. Smith has failed, and I am a beggar!" He hid his face as if fearing to meet her eye. But a weight was taken from Mary's heart, and she felt that she had wronged her husband, to have allowed the fear of crime to have disturbed her thoughts of him, and he looked at her with surprise when she said in the same calm manner,

"These evils will not come upon us, Henry, for there is One who will always take care of us, and of you, in your imprisonment; and we shall yet see brighter days. It is a severe trial for you, but how much easier to bear, than if crime had been the occasion of it! Do not fear for us—we are not friendless, and we shall live together happily again—only keep up your courage, trust in God, and all will yet be well."

"No, father, don't cry so," said Henry, "and little Willie shan't starve, for I shall be a man one of these days, and you know that I can saw and plane very well now, and you know that I shall soon learn to be a carpenter, and we shan't starve I'm sure; and I will come and see you every day in the jail, and tell you how mother and Willie and all are, won't I, mother? But you are crying now, mother; you did not cry before; why do you cry, mother? You told father that we should not starve." And little Henry's tears began to flow too.

They had been so entirely engrossed, that they had not perceived their eldest child, a boy of ten years of age, who, hearing the unusually loud

talking, had crept from his bed in his little room adjoining, and had drawn nearer and nearer, till at last he became so much interested, that he could no longer refrain from offering his word of comfort too. There was silence for a few moments, when Dutton, raising himself from his dejected posture, and brushing away a tear, took his child by the hand, and said,

"You are right, my boy, and you have taught me to be a man." Then putting his hands upon his head, he said to him, in an impressive manner,

"Henry, you are very young, yet never let the remembrance of this night pass from your mind; but when, as you grow older, you meet with bad companions and temptations to do wrong, think of the double suffering you will have, if, through yielding to them, you bring trouble and misfortune upon your home; you will then have no comfort from a good conscience, and will have lost your right to your mother's encouragement and love, and when I am dead, you will be a cause of sorrow and anxiety to her, instead of comfort and support."

These words were always treasured in Henry's heart, and his observance of them aided much in making him the good son he afterwards proved to be.

Dutton went to jail, and his family suffered much during his absence.

Little Willie died; and though submissive to the will of Heaven, and grateful that he was spared the hardships which seemed in store for them, yet there was much grief among them at his death. Mrs. Dutton's health was fast failing; one thing

after another was sold to feed her children and to pay her rent; and though her husband's confinement was but for one short month, so great were the changes in their home, and so altered was his wife's appearance, that when upon his release he saw the desolation that was there, a deep, settled gloom seemed to take possession of his mind; and though he tried anxiously and faithfully for work, and sometimes obtained it, nothing seemed to raise the weight that was upon him. If his wife looked paler or more thoughtful than usual, he seemed roused for a moment, and would speak kindly to her, and when she tried to answer cheerfully he would heave a deep sigh, take up his hat, and go out to seek for work.

Henry, in the mean time, was learning his father's trade, and bid fair to become a first-rate workman. Still there was much suffering among them for want of the common necessaries of life. Dutton became less regular in his returns to his family from his work; he grew more and more silent, till at last, when he did speak, he was irritable, and even unkind. Sometimes his wife would summon all her resolution, and speak to him as she was used to do; she would talk to him about his Father in heaven, and entreat him not to despair; and were he ever so unkind, she would never return his unkindness. She taught her children to love him and treat him with respect, and she prayed to God to aid her in the performance of her duties.

Things went on in this manner for nearly three years, excepting that Mr. Dutton's absences were oftener and longer, and that his treatment of his family grew more harsh and unkind.

While sitting in the dark, late one night, listening for his return (for she had extinguished her lamp, that her husband might have its light when he ate his supper), Mrs. Dutton heard the footsteps of several men approaching her house. She lighted her lamp, and cautiously opened her door, when they knocked. There were several ill-looking men supporting a lifeless body, which she immediately knew to be her husband's! He had been found under the bridge, just at dark; and among the crowd which had gathered round were several men who said that they knew it to be Henry Dutton, the carpenter, and that they would take him home.

It would be useless to detail the grief and suffering of Mrs. Dutton and her children—suffice it to say, that her filial dependence upon her Heavenly Father supported her through her trial. There was a letter found in his pocket, directed to her, which, though much effaced by the water, was sufficiently legible to enable her to unravel the mystery there had been in her husband's conduct. In this letter he confessed that he had been drawn by desperation to the gaming table, where he had various fortune until the last few nights, when an unlucky run of cards left him pennyless, and in debt: that he could not extricate himself, and that if he lived he should continue in the same ruinous course; that he was weary of life; that he despaired of ever again becoming virtuous, and that it would be better for her and her children if he were dead! He said that he had long had thoughts of destroying himself, and that the last night's run of ill-luck had determined him, and that half an hour after that time he

should be beyond this world of care! Wretched man! Beyond this world of care? And where would he then be? Unbidden, in the presence of a righteous God, to render up the talents entrusted to him; before Him who had entreated him by all the promises of love and mercy "to come unto Him if he were weary and heavy laden, and He would give him rest;" who had said, that not even a "sparrow should fall to the ground unnoticed;" and yet his faith had died, and he clung to earthly supports, and they failed him; and his last act was one of heinous guilt! "Oh, ye of little faith, wherefore do ye doubt?" But we must draw a veil over this scene, and leave him to the mercy of his God.

Years of sadness, hallowed by resignation and trust in the protection of heaven, brought Mrs. Dutton and her children to the period at which this story commences.

We must now return to Mary, and Lydia Neele.

On Wednesday afternoon, by five o'clock, Mary had completed her cap, and was on her way with it to Mrs. May. She thought she had never felt so happy in her life, and when she was ushered into Mrs. May's chamber (who was well enough to sit up), and gave the work into her hand, her heart beat so quickly, and the blood mounted so high in her cheeks, that she could scarcely command her voice when she tried to speak about it. But Mrs. May's kind looks and gentle tones soon gave her courage, and when she found that she was pleased and satisfied with the neatness with which it was done, she said, "If you have any

more work you would be willing to let me do, ma'am, I should be very glad to do it, for I want very much to help mother all that I can."

"I am glad to see this wish in you, Mary, and I am perfectly willing to trust you with these six pocket handkerchiefs; and if you do them as well as you have done the cap, you shall have twenty-five cents for them."

O how Mary's eyes did brighten, and how light and happy did her heart feel, as she took the work from Mrs. May's hand, and waited while she was getting her the ninepence she had earned. She courtesied, and, thanking her, put the money into her bag. She was soon on her way home, and just as she came to the toy-shop, where the pretty doll was at the window, she saw Lydia standing and looking at it. She came up to her before Lydia perceived that she was near. They had scarcely spoken since Mary's refusal to share the money with her; but Mary felt so happy herself, that she could not pass her without speaking, and trying if it were possible to make her like her again, not bearing to think that any one was at enmity with her. So stopping at the window too, she said,

"Lydia, how do you do? I have not seen you to speak with you for a long while. I fear that you were a good deal affronted the other day about that ninepence?"

Lydia still continued gazing at the toys, till at last, in reply to something Mary had said, she answered,

"Well, I do not see any reason why you need

to have been so very mysterious about it. If you had told me that you had any good use for it, I should not have urged you so much."

"But I did, Lydia, say that I wanted to help mother, and you laughed at me for thinking that ninepence could do any good, and I did not like to be laughed at; neither did I wish to be obliged to tell you, what is the truth, that I want to give mother all that I earn. I did not want any body to know it, for, somehow, I felt as if I should not be so happy if I talked about it; but now you know, Lydia, and now you will not be affronted any longer, will you? and you think I have done right, don't you?"

Lydia had a great many feelings at this time. She was ashamed of her injustice, and her want of generosity in pressing Mary to this confession, and provoked with herself that she should have cared so much about it. She had not sufficient candour to tell Mary all these feelings, and instead of being won by her kindness, she disliked her even more at this moment than before. She did not speak for several minutes, and Mary, misunderstanding her silence, and thinking it might be from shame, talked on about other things, and at last they began to walk along together, and Lydia grew quite pleasant and good-humoured. Presently they saw a little girl fall down upon the opposite side of the street, and they both ran to help her to get up, and to see if she was hurt. They found that she had bruised her forehead so badly that it bled. Mary said, that if she had only a piece of brown paper moistened with butter to put upon the wound, it would pre-

vent its growing purple. The child cried so, they could not lead it along, though they were very near to Mary's house, and they could not find out where it lived; so Mary told Lydia, that if she would stay by it, she would run home, and ask her mother to get her some paper and some butter. Lydia consented, and sat down on the steps of the house they were near, and tried to soothe the little girl. As she was bending over her, she saw that Mary had left her bag on the ground, and finding that it was in the way of foot passengers, she thought she would take it up to prevent its becoming soiled. As she raised it, it struck against the stone step, and a ringing sound like money was heard from it. Lydia passed her hand down to the place, and felt the round shape of the ninepence that she had heard Mary talk about. Her next wish was to see it. She began to open the bag, and to put her hand in. She felt uneasy while doing it, but she tried to drive away the feeling, by saying to herself, "What harm can it do? I only want to look at it." She drew it out, and was examining it, when she looked up and saw Mary very near her, too near for her, unperceived, to return the money to the bag, and ashamed of being caught in this disgraceful curiosity, she slipped the money into the neck of her frock, and appeared to be very busy, quieting the child. Mary observed that her face was red, and that she seemed confused; but thinking that it was only from stooping so long, she thanked her for waiting, and began to wipe the little girl's forehead, and bound it up with the paper. It felt so much better after this was

done, that she told them her name was Sally Maynard, and where she lived. They led her home, and Mary and Lydia separated for the night.

"Well, Mary," said her mother, as she opened the door of the room where she was at work, "What makes you look so happy?"

"This, mother," said Mary, putting her hand into her bag, "and it is all of my own earn—" but she stopped speaking, and changed colour, for no ninepence was to be found.

"Why, mother, I put it into my bag while I was at Mrs. May's, and I have not opened my bag since I left there! I do not see what can have become of it." And she stood looking the picture of despair.

"What is it, Mary, that you have lost?" said her mother.

"The ninepence for the cap, mother, which I have been depending upon giving to you, and now it is gone, and I cannot think how."

If any thing could have compensated Mary for her disappointment, it would have been the affectionate approbation of her mother. She tried to console her, and told her that she had better go back through the streets through which she had passed, and see if she had not dropped it. Mary went, but soon returned without success, and though she tried to bear her loss patiently, she felt a little sad all the evening, and she did shed a few tears. She fitted her handkerchiefs, though, before she went to bed, determined, if possible, to finish them before Saturday. She arose before the sun, did what housework she could, and then worked upon the handkerchiefs until school time.

There she saw Lydia, and told her of her loss, and observing Lydia colour and look confused, she imagined that it was from surprise, and was continuing what she was saying, when Lydia, turning away from her, began to talk with some one else. Mary did not know what to think of her unkindness; but supposing that she had not forgotten their disagreement about the money, she never suspected the true cause. In the course of the week the handkerchiefs were finished, and she had the happiness of giving twenty-five cents to her mother, who would not pain her by refusing it, and of receiving more work from Mrs. May.

About a fortnight after, she one day met Lydia with the doll in her hand, which she had so much wished to buy. She stopped, attracted by its dress, and said,

"So, Lydia, you have got the doll, after all? Well, I am glad you were not disappointed."

"Yes," said Lydia, colouring, "mother gave it me, because I kept teasing her for it. You see that I can have more money than you, and without working for it either;" and she hurried on, without waiting to hear what Mary was saying. She rejoiced at her escape, and disliked Mary more than ever. Some months passed, and Mary was so industrious, and gained so many more ninepences, that she had almost forgotten her loss. She had the happiness of seeing her brother gaining strength from the nourishing food she was thus able to procure for him; and enjoyed the consciousness that she was not leading a useless life.

In the course of three months, Henry was enabled to do some work, and by the time that winter

came round again he was as strong as ever. Their little home began to look as it used to do, and the only drawback to Mary's and Henry's happiness was the evident failure of their mother's health. She had worked too hard, and had suffered so much from anxiety of mind the last few years, that her strength failed, and the dispensary physician pronounced her to be in a decline.

Her children redoubled their attention, and by their united industry had the comfort of seeing her with but few wants.

PART II.

NEARLY two years after these events, as Mary was one day preparing some medicine for her mother, who was now confined to her bed, some one knocked at the door, and upon opening it, Mary was delighted to find it was her Sunday Teacher, Miss B. She invited her in, and, giving her a chair, she begged her to excuse her for one moment, while she gave some drops to her mother, who was in the next room. Upon her return, Miss B. inquired kindly for her mother, but there was an unusual coolness in her manners towards Mary. Mary felt the change, but was at a loss to discover the reason. At length Miss B. said,

"Mary, have you your school work-basket at home?"

"Yes, ma'am;" said Mary, looking a little surprised.

"Are you willing I should see it just as it is?"

"Certainly, ma'am," said Mary; and immediately went to get it.

She gave it to Miss B. who, much to Mary's astonishment, after taking off from the top some thick cotton work, produced from beneath, a black velvet work-bag, and holding it up to Mary, asked her if she knew whose it was, and how she came by it?"

"Ma'am!—what—" stammered Mary, in utter confusion; when Miss B. drew from the bag

purse, from which she counted ten dollars; and then, looking reproachfully at Mary, she said,

"Mary, why did you commit this crime? I would rather have given you two ten dollar bills, than have had you take this small sum of two dollars." Mary stood looking at Miss B. without saying one word, but with perfect honesty in her face, though there was a slight shade of displeasure. At length she said,

"You have never had occasion to suspect me of telling a falsehood, Miss B., and I hope you will now believe me when I tell you, that I have not the slightest knowledge how your bag came into my work-basket, and that I have never taken one cent from your purse. The last I saw of either was in your hands, when you came into the school the other morning, and you were paying one of the girls for some work her mother had done for you."

Miss B. did not take her eyes from her face while Mary was speaking, and was at a loss to reconcile her look and tone of innocence with the fact of the bag being found with her, and the money gone.

"True, Mary, I never heard you tell a falsehood; but do you not think that appearances are very much against you?"

"I do, ma'am," said Mary; "but I can neither do nor say any more to remove your suspicions;" and although she still looked innocent, she looked grieved, and at last burst into tears.

Miss B. was much moved by her distress, and kindly endeavoured to soothe her, and when Mary had sufficiently recovered herself to speak, she

begged Miss B. to tell her how she knew that the bag was in her basket?

"Because," replied Miss B., "after my return from school the other morning, I could not find it, and thought it possible I might have left it there, as I had been nowhere else; but upon inquiring the next day, no one knew any thing about it. I observed that the room was not as full as usual, and remarked that your name was upon the list of scholars who were absent, and as you are usually so punctual, I inquired of Miss K. if she knew the cause. She said she believed that you were taking care of your mother, who was an invalid. This morning I called again, and learnt that you had not been to school since the day I was there in the beginning of the week; and observing several present who were absent then, I once more asked if any thing was known about my bag, in which were twelve dollars. They answered as before; but I observed that Lydia Neele looked very red, and made no reply. I took no notice of it at the time, but when school was dismissed, I called her to me, and asked her again if she was entirely ignorant of what had become of my bag. She still looked confused, and at last said,

"I do not like to tell."

"But you can have no objection to my having my own bag, Lydia? Come tell me what you know of it."

"I don't know where it is now, ma'am, but—but—the last I saw of it was in Mary Dutton's work-basket;" and she looked so confused that I thought she could not be speaking the truth. I questioned her again and again, but she still persisted that

the last she had seen of it was in your basket. I could not believe her; but still I thought that, as I had never had any cause to suspect her more than I had you, I would come and see you, and that if you were guilty, the mere mention of your work-basket would cause your detection. I confess that when you brought it so readily, I almost regretted that I had asked for it; but I knew that if my fears should prove groundless, I could easily satisfy you by an explanation. You know the rest."

Mary sat in thoughtful silence—she tried to recall the circumstances of the last morning she was at school, and she remembered that Lydia had rather avoided her that day when they were dismissed, and that upon her return home she had put her basket in its usual place, and having had no time to do any sewing, she had not been to it until Miss B. asked for it. She related these facts to Miss B., repeating, that she was entirely ignorant of the manner in which her bag came into her basket.

Miss B.s suspicions were now awakened against Lydia, and telling Mary that a good conscience was better than the good opinion of her friends, and that it would support her even under unjust suspicion, she was preparing to leave her, when Mary asked her, if any of the girls at school had heard Lydia's observation. Miss B. told her that they probably had, as they were standing round her at the time.

"If you believe that I am honest," said Mary, "will you have the kindness to tell them so, Miss B.?"

"I must see Lydia once more, Mary, before I promise you any thing; only remember what I have said to you, and if your conscience is at peace, you will go on with your duties as though nothing had happened." Mary's honest look and quiet smile seemed a proof of the peace of her conscience, and Miss B. bade her a good night.

After her departure, Mary sat down without any employment, (an unusual thing for her,) and was lost in deep thought; when her brother Henry came home from his work. As she merely looked up when he came in, and still continued idle, he said to her,

"Why, Mary, what is the matter? I should think some mighty business must be upon your mind, you look as grave as a judge;" then suddenly recollecting himself, "Is mother worse?"

"No," said Mary, "starting up; "but I must go and see if she wants any thing, and when I come back I will tell you what I was thinking about." She found her mother in a quiet sleep, and coming back softly to Henry, she gave him his supper, and while he was eating it she told him of her interview with Miss B.

Henry listened with much interest and astonishment, and with considerable indignation.

"Suspect my sister of dishonesty!" he exclaimed. "I only wish it had been a boy or a man, and I should know how to resent it. But it can't be; your character is too well known."

"So I thought, or hoped, at least," said Mary. "But certainly appearances are very much against me. Do you advise me to go and see Lydia?"

"Yes, by all means," said Henry, "and I will

go with you, and this very evening too, if nurse Burton will come and sit with mother, while we are gone."

"Well, then, Henry, if you will go and ask her if she will do us the kindness, without telling her the reason why we want to go out, I will be ready, by half past seven o'clock, to go with you. I shall not say any thing about it to mother, till it is all over, for it would only disturb her, and then, if she is strong enough, she shall know the whole."

Henry agreed with her, and went for nurse Burton, who readily granted their request, and at the appointed hour they were on their way to Lydia Neele's.

Mary's heart beat fast, as she was waiting upon the steps for Lydia to open the door. They waited for some moments, but no one came, and they could see through the windows that there was no light in the room. They knocked again, and at length a feeble voice asked "Who is there?"

"Henry and Mary Dutton," answered Henry, "we want to see Lydia Neele."

There was no reply, but something like a faint groan. They knocked again, but no answer was returned, and, tired of waiting, they were turning away from the door, when they beheld Lydia's mother approaching with an unsteady step up the yard which led to her house. They wished to avoid her, and were passing her in silence, when, apparently struck by the unusual appearance of two neatly dressed, quiet people coming from her door, she stopped, and, looking after them, said,

"An' what would you be pleased to have?"

The tones of her voice were so disagreeable and

startling, that Mary clung to Henry's arm, and in a whisper begged him not to answer. Henry felt that it would be best to say something, and thinking it useless to tell her of their desire to see Lydia, while she was so intoxicated, as she might make a disturbance, and losing all wish to see her in the presence of her mother, said civilly,

"Nothing, thank you, ma'am; good evening," and passed quietly on without yielding to Mary's hurrying step; but as soon as they were out of hearing, he said to her,

"What a timid thing you are, Mary; did you think I could not take care of you, or that I was afraid of an intoxicated woman?"

"Hush!" said Mary, and she stood still to listen, "Did you not hear that noise?"

"Come, come, you silly child," said Henry, drawing her on, but his own step was arrested, when the terrible tones of Mrs. Neele's voice were heard, in the beautiful still autumnal evening, raised to their highest pitch, as if scolding at some one who made no reply. One or two blows were heard, and then a loud shriek, and the words, "She is dead! She is dead!" and all was silence. Mary was now as anxious to return, as she had before been to get away; but Henry, observing that the neighbours were fast gathering round the house, told Mary that they had better go home, and relieve nurse Burton of her charge, and that he would go back and find out what was the matter. Mary thought as he did, and they hastened home. After leaving nurse Burton at her own house, Henry returned to Mrs. Neele's. This time he gained admittance. The door was opened by Mr.

Neele, who had returned in nearly the same state as his wife; but his senses were soon restored, when he beheld his little room crowded with people, and his wife and child stretched apparently lifeless upon the floor.

The shriek which Henry and Mary had heard had roused the neighbours also, and upon pushing open the door, they beheld, by the light of the moon, Mrs. Neele and her daughter lying upon the ground. They hastily lighted a lamp by the expiring embers upon the hearth, and upon looking in their faces, perceived that they were both in a swoon. While employed in restoring them, Mr. Neele entered. The scene completely sobered him; and lifting them from the floor he placed them upon their miserable bed, and was striving to bring them to life, when Henry knocked at the door. Henry was preparing to tell the cause of his coming at that hour; but he had spoken only a few words, when Lydia, opening her eyes for a moment, and beholding so many people in the room, and Henry near her bed, attempted to start up, and in a tone of terror just articulated, "Take Henry away!" and fell back on her pillow, trying to cover her face with the clothes. All eyes were now turned upon Henry, as if for an explanation, and with something like suspicion.

"Shall I go for a physician?" said Henry to Mr. Neele.

"Thank 'ee, yes;" and Henry was glad to escape from the scene, especially as he heard Mrs. Neele's voice again struggling for utterance. Being more than ever sure that Lydia had taken the bag, he dreaded the scene that might ensue, should she be

sufficiently restored to speak about it, and, more than all, that his sister Mary's name should be mentioned in such a place, and in such a disgraceful transaction. He almost flew along, as the fresh air restored freedom to his mind and body; for while he had been in that room, and heard and seen Mrs. Neele, an oppressive weight seemed to be upon his heart, and upon every limb. He found the physician at home, and accompanied him as far as the gate of Mr. Neele's house, when, bidding him good night, he begged him, if it would not be too much trouble, to let him know, as he went home, how he left his patients. He then returned to Mary, and told all that had passed, finishing by saying,

"Mary, I am just as sure as though I had seen it, that Lydia took that bag."

"And I," said Mary, "will only acknowledge that appearances are very much against her; but as for that matter, so they are against me, you know, Henry."

"I wish you would not say even that, Mary," said Henry, with some warmth; "there shall not be even appearances against my sister, and to-morrow shall not pass before every suspicion shall be removed."

While they were talking, Dr. A. knocked at the door.

"Well, sir," said they both, as he entered, "how did you leave them?"

"The mother is very well, excepting from the spirits she has taken," said Dr. A., "and she is now sleeping off the effects of it; but Lydia does not seem to be perfectly in her right mind, for she

asked me 'if I were Henry Dutton,' and seemed quite relieved at finding that I was not; but I think she will do very well by to-morrow morning. How is your mother?"

"Will you see her, sir?" said Mary, "she is asleep now, and has not suffered so much to-day as usual."

Dr. A. followed Mary into her mother's room, and after feeling her pulse, he looked thoughtfully at Henry and Mary, who both eagerly inquired if their mother were worse?

"Shall I tell you the truth, my young friends, and have you the strength to bear it with fortitude?"

"Tell us the truth at any rate, Dr. A., and we will do our best to bear it," said Henry. Mary did not reply, but seemed to be gathering strength for whatever Dr. A. might intend to communicate.

"Do you know," said he, "how very feeble your mother is? Are you aware that her life may pass at any moment?"

Although Mary and Henry had for a long while felt that their mother could never recover, they could not avoid the consciousness of a shock, when they, for the first time, heard the truth from her physician.

They said not a word, but Henry, putting his arm round Mary, drew her to him, as if he felt that she would need the support; but Mary was calm, though very pale, and, looking at her mother's emaciated form as she lay upon her neat and comfortable bed, she gently articulated, "Father! Thy will be done!" and then turning to her brother—"Henry," said she; but seeing his tears fall fast,

she drew him beside herself, and they knelt together by their mother's bed, and silently sought that aid upon which she had taught them to rely.

"My children," Mrs. Dutton faintly murmured (for she had with closed eyes and in silence heard the whole conversation), "My children, though I shall leave you, and that very soon, you will not be forsaken, you will have a Father in heaven."

She could say no more. Their kind physician arose, and the speaking stillness of the room was broken by a low and fervent prayer, which he uttered, that carried peace and strength into the hearts of the mother and her children.

He left them, and Mary determined not to undress herself that night, but to lie down in her clothes, that she might be ready, if necessary, and after promising Henry to call him, if he could be of any assistance, they parted for the night, feeling that henceforth they were to be all in all to one another.

When Lydia left school in the morning, after telling Miss B. that she had seen her bag in Mary Dutton's possession, she went home to her mother, to whom she had carried the two dollars she had taken (for Lydia was the thief), and told her of the falsehood of which she had been guilty.

"Well, so much the better, child," said the wicked mother; "I'm glad you have managed so well: now I can trust you again. Come, cheer up, what makes you look so sober? you shall have a new gown with one of the dollars, and with the other we will have a treat."

"O, mother," said Lydia, "let me carry it all

back to Miss B. I do not want the gown nor the treat."

"Poh! you simpleton! Come, no crying; it's done now, and it can't be helped."

So saying, she took the two dollars out of her drawer, and putting on her bonnet and shawl, left poor Lydia crying as if her heart would break.

The hour for the afternoon school came and passed; for she was too much ashamed of her own appearance, and too much afraid of meeting Mary or Miss B., to venture out of the house. She had no spirits to get any thing to eat, and the solitude and growing darkness of the room, and faintness from want of nourishment, seemed to bring her guilt in the most distinct colours before her conscience, till, at last, she was startled by every noise. She even tried to pray; but this was so unusual an effort, that her thoughts were wandering, and at last she fell asleep from exhaustion of mind and body.

Her dreams were as startling as her thoughts, and she was suddenly awakened from her uneasy sleep by a knocking at the door. At first she had no courage to answer; but upon its being repeated, she crept towards the door, and ventured to ask who was there? and, to her dismay, received for answer, "Henry and Mary Dutton." She involuntarily uttered a groan, and sinking upon the ground, remained perfectly stupefied through terror; in which state her mother found her on her return, and thinking that she was only asleep, she shook her by the arm, telling her, "to get up, and not lie there upon the floor." But re-

ceiving no answer, she supposed it was from obstinacy, which excited her anger, and was the occasion of the blows and scolding which Henry and Mary had heard. Finding them ineffectual, she at length seemed to comprehend the truth of her inability to reply, and supposing that she was dead, she uttered the cries which roused the neighbourhood.

When the physician went away, all who had come in through curiosity or kindness withdrew also, and Mr. Neele was left alone with his wife and child (who were now in a quiet sleep), totally ignorant of the cause of the whole scene.

Morning at last came, and Lydia was in a high fever. Mrs. Neele was sufficiently restored to take care of her. She asked her husband to go again for Dr. A., and was left alone with her child, who, as soon as her father had closed the door, said in a faint but earnest tone,

"Mother, I shall die if you do not let me tell Miss B. the truth; you do not know how much I have suffered."

"Well, well, child, it shall be taken care of: you are too ill to do any thing about it to-day."

"Will *you* then, mother? or will you ask Miss B. to come here? Do, mother?"

"I'll see about it, 'tis not such a mighty matter. Why, you make such a fuss about two dollars, what would you think of this?" said her mother, putting her hand into her pocket. But apparently she did not find what she had expected, for she turned very pale, and seemed to be trying to recollect what had passed; at length she said,

"I must have lost it when I was drunk. Well, they will never know who took it."

"What was it mother?" said Lydia.

"Only a purse with twenty dollars, dear, that I took yesterday from off the desk of Mr. Benson, the carpenter, as he turned round to pay one of his workmen; and now I think of it, it was Henry Dutton whom he was paying, Well, 'tis gone, and it can't be helped now.

"O, mother! mother!" said Lydia, "you will bring yourself and me to the gallows!" and poor Lydia sunk back, exhausted and crying, upon the pillow.

"Come, come," said her mother, coaxingly, "don't take on so; there's no harm done, for nobody will know who took it, now that 'tis lost. Look here, see what a pretty new frock I have bought you, and here are some cakes and sugar-plums."

"But Lydia turned away her head, and continued to weep, while Mrs. Neele, observing Dr. A. coming up the yard, hastily put away the gown and sweetmeats, and opened the door for him.

The physician soon found that Lydia's mind was as much diseased as her body, and was contriving some means by which he could be left alone with her, when they were startled by a loud knock at the door, and in a moment Mr. Benson, from whom Mrs. Neele had stolen the money, entered with a constable. At a signal from Dr. A., they followed him into a little room adjoining, but not until the carpenter had taken Mrs. Neele by the arm, and led her in with them. Lydia saw them as they passed the foot of her bed. She

comprehended at once the cause of their being there, but she was too much exhausted to speak.

The moment taken up in passing from one room to the other gave Mrs. Neele time to collect her thoughts, and when Mr. Benson accused her of having taken his purse, with an unblushing face she denied the charge, inviting them to search her house and herself, and emptying her pockets.

"You cannot deny that you were in my shop yesterday," said Mr. Benson.

"I don't want to deny it—and I saw you paying Henry Dutton his wages—and—"

"What!" said the carpenter.

"I don't wish to injure nobody; but I can have my suspicions as well as other folks."

"If you mean to accuse Henry Dutton of the theft, you will never make me believe that," continued the man, warmly; "for there never was a steadier, more likely, honest young man in my employment; so, my good woman, you can't get off in that way. Come, you must go to the court with me, and you ought to have been there some time ago, if riot and wickedness deserve to be punished." And the constable approached her.

"I won't go without Henry Dutton," said she, resisting the impulse he gave her. "You have no more right to accuse me than you have him."

"She is right," said the constable; "Henry ought to go too."

"Well, then, I will go and bring him myself," said Mr. Benson; "for he shall know from me that I do not suspect him."

"Let me put on my shawl and bonnet, and go like a decent woman, as I am," said Mrs. Neele,

and while the constable was watching her operations the carpenter went back to his shop to find Henry.

He was there, and hard at work, and his master found it no easy task to tell him his errand; but at last, summoning his courage, he said rather abruptly,

"Henry Dutton, I believe you are as honest a fellow as ever breathed. Are you willing to go up to the court with me?"

"What for, sir?" said Henry, who had looked up from his work in some astonishment at the address.

"To prove that Mrs. Neele has told a falsehood, and that you have not taken twenty dollars from me."

"Sir! what! said Henry, letting fall his plane, "surely you do not believe me capable of such wickedness?"

"I do not, indeed, Harry, I would not for the world; but I believe you must go with me, for Mrs. Neele won't go without you, and she declares that you are as much to be suspected as herself, as it was you to whom I was paying the money at the time she was in the shop."

"Well, sir, I am ready to go; but I can say nothing against Mrs. Neele, for I did not see her take the purse."

As he finished speaking, the constable appeared at the shop-door with Mrs. Neele. Just as they were leaving the shop, Henry said,

"Will you wait one moment, sir, while I write a line to my sister Mary, who may possibly be

alarmed should she hear of my being seen with a constable?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Benson. And Henry pulled off his hat, from which he took a piece of paper, and turning his back, he wrote a few lines to Mary, explaining the cause of his detention; then directing it, he gave it to little Sally Maynard, whom he had sometimes seen at his sister's, and who was now among the crowd that was beginning to collect around the door, and asking her to carry it to Mary, he accompanied his employer and the constable to the court. Many stared at him as he passed, and several of his acquaintances followed them to the court.

When arrived there, after the usual forms, the judge proceeded to the examination. Mrs. Neele accused Henry of having stolen the purse while Mr. Benson's back was turned. There were no witnesses but herself to prove the accusation; and the carpenter had almost entirely succeeded in rendering her accusation of no effect, when, as Henry took his handkerchief from his hat, and was in the act of wiping his forehead, there fell from it Mr. Benson's purse.

There was perfect stillness in the court for one moment. Mrs. Neele broke the silence by turning triumphantly to the carpenter, and asking him with an insulting nod of the head,

"Well, what do you think now? Didn't I tell you the truth?"

Mr. Benson involuntarily covered his eyes with his hands. Henry had not moved, but he stood with his handkerchief hanging from his hand, and

looking down upon the purse, which had fallen at his feet. At length he turned to his employer,

"Surely, sir," said he, "you cannot suppose that I stole the purse! There is some trick!"

The carpenter held out his hand to him, saying, "I would rather have lost forty dollars than have had this happen."

Then, turning towards the judge, he said,

"Sir, I would take my oath that Henry Dutton knows nothing of this purse; and though I cannot prove that Mrs. Neele took it, I would rather lose the whole than have him within the jail."

"Your feeling is an honourable one," said the judge; "but it must not be gratified. The purse is found upon Henry Dutton, and he must go to jail until the mystery can be cleared up; and as soon as there is any proof of his innocence he shall be immediately liberated. I will detain Mrs. Neele for further examination."

A murmur of commiseration passed through the throng, and several of Henry's acquaintances pressed up to shake hands with him, as if proud of owning him for a friend, and eager to prove that they did not believe him guilty. This mark of confidence and kind feeling touched him more than the accusation, and he hastily brushed away a tear that had started to his eye, while he said, in a low tone, to Mr. Benson,

"Will you do me the kindness, sir, to go to my sister, and tell her all that has happened? My mother is very ill, and she must not be disturbed by the least rumour of it."

"I will, I will, and, if it is possible, you shall

not remain within that hateful jail four-and-twenty hours."

Orders were then given for the departure of the prisoners, and Mr. Benson, after again shaking hands with Henry, proceeded to Mary's house. He found her busily at work, but she received him with a welcome, and inquired "If Henry had been acquitted?"

"I have hardly the heart to tell you," said Mr. Benson, "but I promised him I would."

He then related what had passed, and concluded with the same remark he had made to Henry at parting, "That, if it were possible, he should be speedily released." Mary neither cried nor fainted, though she trembled a little, and she said, almost with a smile of contempt,

"Henry cannot suffer long; he is too well known."

"True, my good girl; I would as soon believe my own son to be guilty. Depend upon me, I will do all that can be done; and, Mary, you must call upon me while your brother is away, and I am sure my wife will be glad to come and help you."

"Thank you, sir, you are very kind; but I hope I shall not be obliged to call upon any one," said Mary.

"Henry told me that his mother was very ill," said Mr. Benson, in a lower tone, "and that she must not be disturbed by the least rumour."

"I shall be anxious to keep it from her, if possible," said Mary, "not because she could not bear it, if she were well, but I fear to startle her, she is so very feeble."

Mr. Benson told her his plans respecting Mrs. Neele, and bade her good-by, vainly trying, as he went home, to solve the mystery."

Mary heard her mother's low voice pronouncing her name, and she was immediately at her side.

"What man's voice have I just heard, Mary?"

"Mr. Benson's, mother."

"Why has he been here at this hour? Has any thing happened to Henry?"

Mary did not answer immediately.

"Something, I am sure, is the matter," said her mother; speak, Mary, you need not fear; I can bear any thing, for I am sure he has not done wrong."

Thus encouraged, Mary related all that had passed, and she saw, by the expression of her mother's face, that there was no need of her seeking to soften the circumstances, nor to give her strength. A slight hectic flush passed over her pale features as Mary proceeded in her narrative; but when it was closed, she was perfectly calm; and after lying with her eyes closed a few moments, she said,

"Mary, if I should die before my son returns, give him my blessing, and tell him I believe him innocent."

She could say no more, but motioned to Mary to fan her, and to bathe her forehead. Mary was occupied in this manner when Mrs. May entered, who, after making kind inquiries, and placing upon the table a small basket, in which were some things for Mrs. Dutton, gave Mary a large bundle of work, which she said had been sent to her, that Mary might do it.

"But you cannot have time, I fear, Mary, your mother is so ill. Shall I leave it with you?"

"If you please, ma'am," said Mary; "and if I find that I am delaying it, I will return it to you."

Mrs. May told her, that if it was completed within a fortnight, it would be time enough, and was preparing to leave her, when Mary, perceiving that her mother had fallen asleep, followed her into the other room, and said,

"If it is not taking too great a liberty, ma'am, will you please to give me your advice?"

"Willingly, Mary, what do you want to know?"

Mary then told her of the suspicions that rested upon herself with regard to the bag, and upon Henry, from the purse, and concluded by asking her, "What she could or ought to do?"

Mrs. May had listened with much interest, and in her own mind concluded that Lydia Neele and her mother were the guilty ones.

"Do not be anxious," said she; "Mr. Benson will do all that can be done for Henry, and I will go and see Miss B."

"Mary," said a child's voice. Mary started upon perceiving that little Sally Maynard, who had brought her the note in the morning, had come into the room unperceived, and must have heard the conversation.

"Well," said Mary, "what do you want, Sally?"

"Perhaps I have done wrong to listen; but you were saying something I thought I knew more about than you seemed to know, and if it is Miss B.'s bag you are talking about, I think I know who took it."

"Who do you think it was?" eagerly asked both Mrs. May and Mary.

"I think it was Lydia Neele who took it," said the child, "because I saw the bag in her hands, and I remember that Mary's work-basket was standing by her at the time."

"Are you speaking the truth, Sally?" said Mary.

"To be sure I am; I never tell a lie," said little Sally. And I know another time too, when Lydia took something from you, when she thought that nobody would see. Don't you remember when I fell down and you went to get me some paper and butter to put upon my head because I bruised it so badly, ever so long ago, and Lydia staid to take care of me? Well, she took a ninepence from your bag, which you left upon the side walk."

"Can it be possible?" said Mary, "could she be so wicked?"

"It is true, for I saw her do it with my own eyes," persisted Sally.

"Why did you not tell Miss B. your suspicions when she asked the scholars about the bag?" said Mary.

"Because I have not been at school since, and I did not know that she had asked any thing about it, and I did not suppose at the time that she meant to steal the money; I did not think much about it until I heard you talking."

"Will you go with me," said Mrs. May, "and tell Miss B. what you have told us?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Sally.

"Well, then, we will go now," said Mrs. May.

"Please, ma'am, first let me tell Mary what I came for. I thought you might want some errands

done, as Henry was not at home. Can't I do any?"

"Thank you, Sally, none; but if you can prove my innocence to Miss B. you will do me a great service."

"I will tell her all I saw, Mary;" and she immediately left the house with Mrs. May.

Mary again returned to her mother. She was now awake, and seemed refreshed by her sleep.

"Have you heard from Henry, Mary?"

"No, mother, not yet.

"I can bear a little reading now, Mary; read to me from the fourteenth chapter of John,—I always feel peacefully after reading that chapter."

Mary took down the Bible and read as her mother requested. It did her own heart good, and she felt as if she had received new strength to meet any trial which might await her.

The day wore away, and as Mary was lingering at the window in the hope of seeing Henry coming home, she perceived Dr. A, and Mrs. May with Miss B. and little Sally approaching the house. They soon came to the door, which Mary opened. Miss B. shook hands with Mary as she entered, telling her that she was truly glad to have every suspicion removed, and was sorry she should have been the occasion of any anxiety to her. Mary found that a purse was left in her hands, and was about to express her gratitude, when Miss B. put her finger upon her lips and motioned her to be silent.

"Mary," said Dr. A., "I am just come from Lydia Neele, and she has requested me to see Miss B. and yourself, and to tell you for her (as she is

too ill to speak much) of the wickedness of which she has been guilty. And I was at Miss B.'s for that purpose when Mrs. May and Sally came upon the same errand. She has confessed the theft of the ninepence and of the two dollars. To-morrow, if you can leave your mother, you had better go and see Lydia; perhaps you can be of some service to her, for her mother is absent."

"Most willingly, sir," said Mary; "but can you tell me any thing about Henry?"

"Why, what of him?" said Dr. A. Upon hearing what had passed, he remembered the scene at Mrs. Neele's in the morning, and had little doubt in his own mind that she was the culprit.

"I did not know until this moment that Henry had been arrested; but I will go immediately and see what can be done."

"Thank you, thank you, sir," said Mary; "but, first, will you be kind enough to see my mother? she has been told the whole, and will feel easier if she knows that you will interest yourself."

"You are right, Mary," said Dr. A.; and passing into the sick room he drew his chair to the bedside, and gently asked the suffering invalid how she did: and gradually he spoke of Henry, and of his determination to see him. Mrs. Dutton pressed his hand as an expression of gratitude, and said,

"To you, my kind friend, I can say what I could not to my child. I do not doubt my boy's honesty, but should he be detained a long time what changes will take place in our little home! Alas! you cannot have forgotten, sir, what one short month in jail did for my poor husband and for us! 'Tis this

I fear, and its consequences upon his young heart. Will you, then, see him for me? Will you take Mary with you? and will you remind him of his father's words to him the first night he told us of his misfortunes? He knows them by heart; I have not strength to repeat them. Give him my blessing, and I will pray to my Father that I may live till he returns to me."

"I will do all that you have desired, Mrs. Dutton, and, if possible, as you would do it; but you must avoid all excitement in my absence, for your strength is far gone."

Mrs. Dutton only smiled, but there was peace and resignation in the smile. Dr. A. left the room, and communicating to Mary her mother's wish that she should go with him, Mrs. May immediately offered to remain with her mother. Mary thanked her for her kindness, and left the house with Dr. A. to go to the jail.

They were admitted. There were tears and joy in the meeting of the brother and sister. At length Henry said,

"I did not mean that to-day should have passed without fully establishing your innocence, Mary, and I little thought that it would have ended and found my own suspected."

Mary gladly told him of Sally's testimony, and of Lydia's confession. Henry declared that his confinement would not be half so irksome, now that he knew that his sister's character was no longer unjustly suspected; he was ready to forgive Lydia, he said, since she had suffered so much, and had confessed her guilt. He made many anxious inquiries

after his mother, sent her many kind messages, and upon receiving those which Dr. A. brought him from her, he could no longer restrain his tears.

"Tell my mother," said he, "that she shall not be disappointed; that I do, and will, trust in my Heavenly Father; that my father's words have been constantly in my mind; and that they are a comfort and support to me; for I have, indeed, the consolation of knowing, '*that I have not brought this disgrace upon myself, and that I have not lost my right to my mother's encouragement and love.*'"

They separated, Dr. A. assuring him that he would do all that he could to procure his release, and to establish his innocence.

Mary's account of Henry gave true happiness to his mother, who, after committing herself and her children to the care of an ever-watchful Providence, fell into a quiet slumber.

But to return to the events of the morning.

After Mrs. Neele had left the house Dr. A. was alone with Lydia, and he at length succeeded in drawing from her the cause of the evident distress of mind she endured. He talked with her, and at her request prayed with her, and at length left her to make, according to her request, her confessions to Miss B. and to Mary. Lydia had not spoken of her mother, not knowing what had taken place, and thinking she might be acquitted as she had lost the money, she could not voluntarily expose her. Great was her surprise and grief, then, when Dr. A. returned to her and told her what had passed; and to his question, "Do you know any thing about this, Lydia?" she replied only by tears. At last she said in a distressed tone—

"What can I, what ought I to do? Can I accuse my own mother? and yet he is innocent, and his mother is good, and she is dying!"

"Speak the truth, whatever it may be, Lydia; but try and compose yourself," said Dr. A.

After some time, Lydia said,

"My mother took the money; she told me so this morning; but she told me that she had lost it, and I do not know how Henry Dutton came by it."

Lydia drew a long breath, and fainted. Dr. A. soon restored her, and the first words she uttered, upon recovering her senses, were,

"Do not take me to court to witness against my mother! I cannot go! I cannot go!"

"You shall not, Lydia," said Dr. A., soothingly; "I will try that your mother shall be spared as much as possible."

"Oh, bless you, thank you," sobbed Lydia; but she started when she heard her father's step at the door.

"Do not leave me alone with him, sir," she said, imploringly, "he may be ——"

She could not finish the words.

"I understand you, Lydia, I will not."

But Mr. Neele entered with a steady step and eye, and approaching the bed, he asked her kindly how she did.

"She is very ill," said Dr. A., "and I must leave her in your care for the present, for ——"

"I know, I know," interrupted Mr. Neele.

"You know what has happened, then, sir? Perhaps your daughter will be able to tell you more than you can know, and may she yet live to be a

comfort to you. But no, Lydia, you must not talk any more to-night; try to sleep."

The poor girl was too much exhausted to speak, and her father, obeying a signal from Dr. A., followed him into the next room. There Dr. A. told him of the confessions of Lydia, both with regard to herself and her mother, and before he had finished, Mr. Neele wept like a child.

"It is we who have ruined her—it is we who have taught her to sin; and now what can I do to save her?"

"Do you sincerely wish for the salvation of your child?" said Dr. A., seriously.

"From the bottom of my soul."

"Do you ever pray?" said Dr. A., in the same tone, but with kindness.

"Scarcely ever—I dare not," said the wretched man.

"Guilty as you are, you are not forsaken—you have still a Heavenly Father who will rejoice in your repentance, you have still a Saviour who has promised the pardon of his Father and of ours to the penitent. Pray, then, my friend, and let this night, passed at the bed of your sick child, be one of humiliation and supplication, and, believe me, you *will be heard.* I will see you in the morning, and as you value your immortal soul, as you would preserve it from future misery, let not the sufferings and resolutions of this day pass from your mind."

"After giving him some directions with regard to Lydia, he left him, renewing to him the promise which he had made to her, of sparing, as much as possible, the exposure of his wife's crime.

It was now too late for Dr. A. to see any of those friends who were interested for Henry Dutton, and he deferred until the morning putting any of his plans into execution.

As soon the next day as he could gain admittance, he went to the jail, and asked for an interview with Mrs. Neele.

"I fear it will do little good, sir," said the jailer, "for she is so intoxicated, she is almost insensible."

"Intoxicated in jail? How came she by spirit there?" asked Dr. A., sternly.

"That's more than I can tell; but if she could manage to get Henry Dutton into jail, she would manage to get in almost any thing else."

"Well, let me see her," said Dr. A., and the man led the way. They found Mrs. Neele as he had described her, intoxicated, and apparently awaking from a stupefying sleep. Dr. A. addressed her by her name.

"Well, what do you want, Doctor? I'm not ill;" and then, as if recollection came to her, she said, slowly raising herself, and looking round,

"Where am I?—what has happened?—ay, ay, I remember it all now;" and breaking into an hysterical laugh, she muttered, "I managed that well, didn't I?" and seemed again in a stupor.

"Mrs. Neele!" said Dr. A., hoping to gain her attention by the sound of her own name.

"She opened her eyes, and looked at him, but apparently without recognising him. He hoped he might succeed better by speaking of Lydia.

"Your child, Lydia, is very ill," said he, slowly. It was as he had hoped, for she gradually rested

her dim and wandering eye upon his face, and, at last, said, "What of her?" then losing herself again, she added, with the same horrid laugh,

"Poor thing! two dollars frightened *her*, but twenty could not *me!*—who would have thought that I could have put it into his hat so cleverly, without his seeing it?"

But as her own words sounded upon her ear, they seemed to recall her senses; for, slowly looking round the room, she murmured, in a low and terrified tone,

"What did I say? I was dreaming!"

Suddenly a frightful consciousness returned to her eyes, and glancing them wildly upon Dr. A., as if to ascertain whether she had been understood, she observed him writing upon the back of a letter. Intuitively she comprehended his purpose, and springing from her chair, she staggered towards him, attempting to seize the paper, but falling before she could reach him she gave one long, loud shriek of mingled rage and disappointment, when instantly her face and neck were covered with blood.

She had broken a blood-vessel. Her dissipated life had prepared her for this dreadful end. Every exertion was made for her recovery, but it was all in vain; and after having her removed to a separate room, Dr. A. left her upon a bed, with directions that she should be kept perfectly quiet.

He then proceeded to the court-house, and requesting permission to speak with the judge alone, he communicated to him his interview with Lydia and her mother, and gave into his hands Mrs. Neele's confession, which he had written down.

"There seems but little doubt of the fact," said the judge, "that Mrs. Neele has, in some way or another, put this purse into Dutton's hat; but how and when she did it remains a mystery. She must be examined again."

"I fear, sir," said Dr. A., "it will be impossible, for she has broken a blood-vessel, and any excitement would cause her death."

While they were conversing, a messenger from the jailer came to request that Dr. A. would return to Mrs. Neele, who had expressed an earnest desire to see him with Henry Dutton.

"She seems to be dying, sir," said the man; "and ever since her husband, poor man, has been with her, she has been growing worse."

"Has Mr. Neele been with her?" hastily inquired Dr. A. And the thought suddenly occurring to him, that the scene might make a salutary impression upon his awakened conscience, he said aloud, "I am glad of it;" and obtaining permission for Henry to go with him, he again repaired to Mrs. Neele. As they were going thither, Dr. A. rapidly gave Henry the outlines of the facts, which were fast proving his innocence; but Henry was so overwhelmed by the confession of such villany, that he was speechless.

The moment Mrs. Neele perceived them, she made a sign to them to approach as nearly as possible. Her husband was sitting with his back to the bed, with his face buried in his hands. She was terribly altered, and was evidently dying. She tried ineffectually to speak, and her distress was shocking. Henry involuntarily hid his eyes, but she motioned to Dr. A. to induce him to look at

her, upon his doing which she touched with her finger his hat, which was lying upon a chair near her bed, and then feebly rolling up the corner of her shawl, which she still had on, she extended it over the hat until it unfolded into it; and inclining her head slightly, as she thought they understood her meaning, she struggled to give utterance to the words—"I did it—he is innocent—my husband—my child—" but the ruptured vessel could bear no more; and, going into a frightful convulsion, she stretched out her arms to her husband as if to implore him to save her; but that effort was her last. The spirit had passed beyond mortal sight or knowledge.

When Mrs. Neele, on the morning of her seizure, asked the constable to permit her to get her shawl and bonnet, to her own surprise she found the purse pinned up in the corner of her shawl; for, having been so much intoxicated the day before, she had forgotten where she had put it, and finding it impossible to elude the constable's eye, which was upon her, and knowing that her detection would be certain unless she could manage to get rid of it, she determined to do so, even at the risk of losing it altogether; therefore, carefully refraining from any expression of surprise, she proceeded to Mr. Benson's, persisting in her own innocence, and endeavouring to throw suspicion upon Henry. She watched her opportunity, and while Henry was writing his note to Mary, his back being towards her, she unpinned her shawl, and, without being noticed, dropped the purse, which was filled with bills, into his hat, which he had laid down; and as she drew his handkerchief over it so

as entirely to conceal it, he thus unconsciously carried it with him to the court-house.

A few moments after the death of Mrs. Neele Mr. Benson came to see Henry, and having been totally unsuccessful in his endeavours to discover the truth, he came with a heavy heart; but upon applying to the jailer for admission, to his surprise he was told that he was with Mrs. Neele, and that Dr. A. was there also. He hastily passed on, and entered the room just after the wretched woman had breathed her last.

After a silent greeting between him and Henry, Dr. A. told them they had both better leave the room, and that he would remain with Mr. Neele.

Again did Dr. A. strive to make the discipline he was enduring of lasting effect upon the heart and conscience of Mr. Neele.

The story was soon told, but Henry had received too great a shock to be buoyant at his acquittal. Mr. Benson left him to communicate to the magistrate the last scene of Mrs. Neele's life, and in the course of two hours Henry was seated by his mother, relating to her and Mary the circumstances of that eventful day, and receiving the looks and words of affection from the two beings who were dearest to him in the world.

Strange though it may appear, Henry seemed an altered being. There was a calmness and thoughtfulness in his step and manner which would have suited one who had numbered more than nineteen years. Mary felt that her respect and confidence were more than ever excited towards him, and even his mother called him "*my son*" with a peculiar tone of dependence. Henry himself felt the change.

His own responsibleness and accountability as a human being seemed more like realities to his mind than they ever before had done; he felt more as if he were a man; for his eyes had been opened upon a world without and within, upon which he could never again close them.

The few hours of human suffering, anxiety, and guilt to which he had been a witness, and all that he had personally endured, had, as it were, enlarged his heart and his mind, and added stature to his frame.

Neither he nor Mary allowed the evening to pass without going to see Lydia. There they found Dr. A. and Mr. Neele: Mrs. Neele had been buried in the afternoon.

Lydia was still very ill; for though she had been spared the most painful details, she knew of her mother's death, and its cause.

The meeting was a painful one; but all that kindness of look, and manner, and word, could do, was done by Henry and Mary, to soothe and spare the feelings of Lydia and her father. They did not stay long, for Dr. A. wished that Lydia should be kept as still as possible; but Mary was unwilling to leave her without some female who could watch with her. She would willingly have staid with her herself, but she knew that her duty was at home; and she therefore told Dr. A. that, if he approved of it, she would stop at Nurse Burton's on their way home and see if it were possible that she could come and stay with Lydia; for Mary remembered that the purse Miss B. had left in her hand would enable her to pay her for her services for that night at least, and she hoped by the next

day, that some other arrangements could be made; for she knew that she must not allow herself the pleasure of compensating her beyond that night.

"I wish you would, Mary," said Dr. A., "and I will stay here till I hear from you."

Henry Dutton was not the only one who was changed by the events of the few last days. Mr. Neele seemed a new being. He was gentle, submissive, and subdued. He was unremitting in his attentions to Lydia, and his respectful and grateful manners to Dr. A. evinced that that good friend's prayers had not been in vain.

Nurse Burton passed that night with Lydia; and the next day Miss B. and Mrs. May engaged her to take care of her until she was well. Poor Lydia, anxious to make all the reparation in her power, directed Miss B. where she could find the new gown, and cakes, and sugar plums, which had been bought with the stolen money, and which had remained where her mother had thrust them the morning she was carried to jail. Miss B. had the satisfaction of establishing, during the hours she passed by her side, such salutary impressions in her heart, that Lydia once more dared to look her in the face, and to pray to her Heavenly Father. She enforced, by her own example, the gentle and persuasive teachings, by which her kind friend was striving to restore her father to his own and his child's respect, and to direct him to his God and his Saviour, who were waiting to welcome him.

A few lingering weeks were added to Mrs. Dutton's suffering life, and her children were then called upon to receive her last blessing and instructions.

It was a beautiful autumnal afternoon, and though every leaf that was visible from the windows was touched by the brilliant shades of the departing year, and looked but the more beautiful in the softened rays of the setting sun; still there was that indescribable consciousness of decay and death, which American foliage in its autumnal dress irresistibly sheds over the heart of the beholder. It seemed as if these thoughts were passing in the mind of Mrs. Dutton, as her eye rested upon the variegated bough of a maple-tree, which, in the evening breeze, gently waved before her window.

Her children had scarcely left her the whole day. She had passed a night of suffering, and Dr. A. had told them that she could scarce survive another. They were rendering to her those little offices which sometimes soothe the weariness of pain, and seemed to have in some measure succeeded; for she motioned to Henry to read to her from the Bible; and, as he closed it, after reading to her, at her request, the prayer of our Saviour for his disciples, on the night he was betrayed, she said,

"Sing, my children, once more to me; it will soothe me."

They joined in one of those hymns which she had taught them, and as their voices ceased, she murmured,

"My Father in heaven, be with my children while they are in the world! Save them from sin —guard them in temptation—and when they shall have fulfilled Thy will, receive them unto Thyself. Hear me now, O my Father; forgive my sins,

accept my repentance, and be merciful unto my soul."

And the peace which spread itself over her features, seemed to her children to be a token from Heaven of her acceptance there.

At length, feebly extending her hands to Henry and Mary, and joining theirs in hers,

"My children," she said, in broken tones, "remember that *you* must one day pass through this scene. 'Remember, then, your Creator in the days of your youth.' Make him your father and your friend—pray to him—lay every thought before him—for when no earthly friend can understand your joys and sorrows, He will hear, and you will feel that he has heard. My son, be firm in integrity, upright in all your intercourse with the world—let no one laugh at your religious principles—remember that you are God's child—be a father to your sister.—Mary, you, too, will go into the world; be faithful, my child, be strictly conscientious; you may yet have trials to endure, which will require all the aid which the support of a good conscience can give you. Be to your brother the true religious friend, the devoted sister, and look forward to Heaven as your home."

A beautiful smile lingered for a moment upon her face, and her children knew that their mother's spirit was gone to that home.

They were not without friends at this time. Even Lydia, who was well enough to leave her room, came with her father to aid Mary, if possible, in any arrangement she might wish to make; and Mary accepted her services, rather than those

of her other friends, anxious to prove her entire forgiveness, and to strengthen the good impressions which she had seen were fastening upon her mind.

Henry also entrusted to Mr. Neele, who had humbly offered his services, the execution of some necessary preparations, although Dr. A. and Mr. Benson would have relieved him of all care.

Mary prudently, but with gratitude, declined the acceptance of an entire mourning dress, which a lady in the neighbourhood, who had been very attentive to her mother, kindly offered to procure for her, and though she knew that Miss B.'s purse would have liberally supplied her, she changed only the ribbon upon her straw hat, and as her dress had always been neat and simple, it would not do violence to her feelings by its contrast with them. She remembered her mother's opinion upon the subject, which was, that mourning was often a needless and ruinous expense, and an unnecessary expression of grief, from one whose sorrow must be alike under every garb, besides the intrusion of other thoughts upon the mind, at a time when it had most need of serious meditation and of spiritual aid.

Her friends did not oppose her decision. The second day after her death, Mrs. Dutton was laid within her grave; and the evening found Henry and Mary alone in their now desolate home. They recalled to one another the words of comfort and instruction which their mother had spoken to them, and, committing themselves to the care of that Parent in whom she had taught them to trust, they retired to rest.

Mary devoted the next day to arranging the clothes and other things which had belonged to her mother. She took the Bible, from which they had so often read to her, determining that when she and Henry should part, she would give it to him; for they had decided that it would be better for them to give up their rooms, and what little furniture there was; and that, while Henry should endeavour to make some arrangement to board with Mr. Benson, Mary should go into a family.

She reserved the hymn and prayer books for herself, and then got in readiness the furniture and whatever articles were to be disposed of. Her brother, after his return from his morning's work, told Mary that his kind employer, upon hearing of their plans, had offered to make him his head workman, and to receive him into his family; and that Mrs. Benson wished Mary to come and stay with her until she heard of a good place, as it would be decidedly best for them to give up the house, to avoid the rent and necessary expenses, and to sell the furniture immediately.

"Our mother told us the truth," said Mary; "we *have* a Father in heaven."

The next month found Mary in Mrs. May's family, earning her own subsistence, and proving, by her daily life, that her mother's words were in her heart.

Henry, too, was beginning to feel at home at Mrs. Benson's, and had the prospect of laying up something which might aid himself and Mary at some future time.

And Lydia was not forgotten, nor her father.

D. A. continued his kindness, and procured for him a respectable employment and boarding place, and his cares were not disappointed.

Miss B.'s mother received Lydia into her family. She joined her Sunday class, and both she and Mary felt a thrill of emotion pass through their frame, as they repeated to her from their Catechism,

"*God sees me when I am alone, and when no other being sees me.*"

THE END.

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